

wait until tomorrow. It was going to be awesome.

After dinner I had to go to bed early. We had to get up at 5 in the morning. On the way to Kennedy Space Center, we stopped at Waffle House to get some breakfast.

When we got there we went to the Protocol Office and got our bus passes so we could get to the grandstand.

While we were standing in line, we met this man who works at NASA in California. He was really excited, too. Then I noticed he had a really cool necklace and on it was the word NASA. It also had a blue flashing light.

I told him it was really cool. Then he asked me if I really liked it. I said yes, then he gave it to me. I was so happy.

After that, he showed me his official NASA badge. Then we got on the bus. It was a 10-minute ride to the grandstand.

When we got there we picked seats on the top row. You could see the Launch Pad perfectly. It was a long time until the shuttle went off so I went in the Saturn Building and watched a movie.

It was about the Apollo 11 mission. Neil Armstrong walked the first few steps on the moon in the Apollo mission. Then I had to go sit down.

The shuttle was about to go off. At 9 minutes the countdown stopped. Then it started again. At 1 minute until it launched, I was so excited. When it got to 10 seconds, we all went 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

Then it happened. It was so awesome. It was like an earthquake. The ground shook, and the noise sounded like an explosion.

It lasted about two minutes, then it was gone. It was already in space. It can go around the world in 90 minutes.

Then we got back on the bus. When we got back to the Space Center, we went to see a 3-D movie called "The Space Station." The space station is a place where astronauts can go and live.

Then we went home after our last day at the Kennedy Space Center. So ends my wonderful space vacation.●

TRIBUTE TO BRENDA S. GEIST

● Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Mrs. Brenda Geist on the occasion of her retirement from the Department of the Navy. Today, we celebrate with Brenda and her family her remarkable 37 years of exemplary and distinguished service to the Navy and the Nation. It is a privilege for me to address the Chamber today in honor of Brenda.

"Far and away the best prize that life offers," Teddy Roosevelt remarked, "is the chance to work hard at work worth doing." When Brenda first began with the Navy Department at the Charleston Naval Station, she understood that supporting the men and women of the Sea Service was indeed work worth doing. Brenda has remained true to this principle ever since.

From the small Navy office on the Cooper River to the many postings around the world that followed, Brenda quickly became recognized by all for her acumen and accomplishments. Understandably, Brenda's talents were ultimately sought by the Chief of Naval Operations and the Secretary of the Navy in Washington, D.C. In 1987, Brenda was selected to serve as the director of the Congressional Travel Division

for the Navy Secretary's legislative affairs office. Past being prologue, Brenda's record of success continued unabated and has been nothing short of outstanding.

For 15 years, Brenda has been a key advisor to a succession of eight admirals. During her tenure, Brenda planned and coordinated travel around the world for more than 300 congressional delegations. A superb financial manager, Brenda also responsibly managed annual budgets of over \$1.5 million—maintaining flawless documents and receiving the highest possible praise at every audit. Every day, her work directly supported the positive, productive interaction of senior Navy leadership and the Congress.

The Pentagon on the Potomac is a long way from the little Navy office on the Cooper River. Brenda's heartfelt commitment to the Navy's officers and sailors, her guiding compass over the years, never wavered.

Sharing this adventure with Brenda is Captain Gary Geist, U.S. Navy Ret., her husband of 24 years, and their children, Jim, Stacey, Darcey, Sam, and Curtis. With the loving support of her immediate Navy family, Brenda time and again, rose to the occasion for her larger extended Navy family.

Mr. President, I invite you and our Senate colleagues to join me and offer our sincere appreciation to Brenda Geist for her years of dedication and outstanding service. We wish her and her loving family "fair winds and following seas" as they begin their next adventure together. They will be sorely missed, but most certainly never forgotten.●

HEALTH CARE HERO

● Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to salute a Health Care Hero from my home State of Oregon, the N2K Nursing Shortage Demonstration Project.

Several of my colleagues and I have come to this chamber before to discuss the growing shortage of health care workers in this country. This growing crisis has severe implications for quality patient care, retention of qualified nurses, and the future of health care delivery. Last year, Congress began to address this problem by passing the Nurse Reinvestment Act, but there is much more work to be done.

Fortunately, an exciting new program in Oregon is working to find new ways to recruit nurses. The N2K project offers paraprofessional staff from local hospitals and clinics the opportunity to secure a nursing degree while continuing to receive their current salary and benefits. Participants finish prerequisite classwork, participate in clinical training and complete an 18 month nursing degree program. Because they have come from health care institutions, these workers are more likely to continue in the nursing profession and stay in the communities where they were trained, solving some

of the pressing issues creating the nursing crisis.

But the most unique and beneficial part of this program is that recruits must be bilingual or be from a minority population. A major challenge facing health care delivery today is the severe lack of bilingual health professionals. In Oregon, and in many other places, we have large immigrant communities, primarily Spanish-speaking, and few nurses who can communicate with them easily. Many N2K participants would not have the opportunity to pursue a professional nursing career were this program not available. As nurses, they will bring a new level of comfort and care to non-English speaking patients.

Although the N2K demonstration project is still in its initial stages, it is already showing great success. Representatives from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health visited Oregon this week to meet with the participating institutions and 11 students completing the program. The visitors were deeply impressed with the project, particularly after speaking with these excellent students who look forward to a rewarding career in nursing.

Today I honor the N2K project as a Health Care Hero. N2K's vision and dedication to building a more diverse health care work force is helping Oregon find the quality workers we need to meet tomorrow's health care challenges. I look forward to the project's continuing success and wish the partnership all the best as it moves forward.●

TRIBUTE TO JOHNSON CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC TEAM

● Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I rise today in the Senate to pay tribute to the Johnson Central High School Academic Team. Recently, the members of this Academic Team won their fourth straight 15th Regional Governor's Cup.

The Johnson Central Academic Team won the overall District 60 Governor's Cup Championship and went on to claim the Regional title. Along with winning the overall title, the team was awarded top honors in the Written Assessments section and the Future Problem Solving team also won first place. Also, the Quick Recall team defended their title by placing first 2 years in a row. Individual members also placed first in Mathematics, Language Arts and English Composition, and Science and Social Studies.

The citizens of Paintsville, KY are fortunate to have the 15th Regional champ's living and learning in their community. Their example of hard work and determination should be followed by all in the Commonwealth.

I congratulate the members of the Academic Team for their success. But also, I want to congratulate their peers, coaches, teachers, administrators, and parents for their support and sacrifices they've made to help the

Academic Team meet those achievements and dreams.●

50th ANNIVERSARY OF WORLD MEDICAL RELIEF, INC.

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate World Medical Relief, Inc. for 50 years of distinguished service to needy individuals in the United States and around the world. On March 8, 2003, staff members, supporters, and beneficiaries of World Medical Relief, Inc. services will gather in my home state of Michigan for the "Miracles of Mercy Gala 2003." This event will commemorate the commitment and dedication that World Medical Relief, Inc. has provided to the sick and needy.

For 50 years, World Medical Relief, Inc. has been a driving force for medical support both in my home state of Michigan and internationally. It is noteworthy that the success and accomplishments of this program today are in part the direct result of the unwavering devotion of founder Irene M. Auberlin. The hard work and perseverance of Mrs. Auberlin is now reflected by the many individuals and groups that continue to provide assistance to those most in need.

Today, the program serves over 1,500 people in the metropolitan Detroit area and 125 nations worldwide. I would like to congratulate William N. Genematas for receiving this year's Irene M. Auberlin Service Above Self Award for his long-time dedication to World Medical Relief, Inc. I also would like to commend both the Ford Motor Company Fund for its continued support of the Senior Prescription Program and the Christian Association of Medical Mission for their international aid efforts in developing nations. World Medical Relief, Inc. and its members deserve both our respect and gratitude.

I am sure that my colleagues in the Senate will join me in offering our congratulations to World Medical Relief, Inc. and its members as they celebrate 50 years of distinguished service.●

THE HEROIC EFFORTS OF BILL CARR AND JEFF KEEZER

● Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, today it is my great honor to recognize the valiant efforts of two volunteer firefighters from Ainsworth, NE.

Mr. Bill Carr and Mr. Jeff Keezer of the Ainsworth Volunteer Firefighter Department were instrumental in the April 22, 2002 rescue attempt of Timothy Culpepper, a digital communications worker who was stranded more than one thousand one hundred feet in the air when a fifteen hundred foot telecommunications tower he was working on partially collapsed near Bassett, NE.

When a wire snapped disabling and stranding Mr. Culpepper, several agencies, including the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, were called upon for the dangerous rescue

mission. However, upon arriving at the scene, response teams realized they were ill-equipped to perform the high-altitude rescue.

Bill Carr, a carpenter and married father of three, had spent many summers during college painting tall communications towers. Jeff Keezer, a married father of one, works for a steel company that erects hundred-foot grain elevators. Though these experiences could not have adequately prepared them for this dangerous and technically challenging rescue. They quickly volunteered to help.

With no regard for their personal safety, Mr. Carr and Mr. Keezer, armed only with estimations of the exact height of the stranded worker, began to make the physically challenging two-hour ascent to rescue the man who was hanging only by a harness. Carrying bundles of rope and heavy rescue equipment, these brave firefighters, along with a handful on colleagues from the Lincoln Fire Department, scaled the tower amid 30-mph winds and with dwindling daylight. Upon reaching Mr. Culpepper it was discovered that tragically he did not survive the impact of tumbling debris.

Mr. Carr and two other firefighters managed to scale the total distance to Mr. Culpepper in ninety minutes while Mr. Keezer, with heavy rescue equipment on his back, and two other firefighters scaled to the half-way point to manage the recovery effort and descent that lasted more than 3 hours.

Unfortunately these two brave and selfless first-responders were omitted from an award ceremony in Washington, D.C. on February 14. Though the Department of Justice didn't recognize their efforts, Mr. Carr and Mr. Keezer can forever hold their heads high knowing their bravery and the fabric of their character has made all Nebraskans, and especially their neighbors in Ainsworth, proud of their actions.

Mr. President, heroism comes in many forms and the courage displayed by Mr. Carr and Mr. Keezer with danger present is a shining example. Nebraskans like Mr. Carr and Mr. Keezer are selfless, honorable and just and they are what makes living in Nebraska living "the good life."

I am proud to represent Nebraskans like Mr. Carr and Mr. Keezer who are committed public servants. Volunteer services are an essential part of small-town America. Without the brave and selfless efforts of everyday citizens like Mr. Keezer and Mr. Carr, many rural communities would lack vital protection and security. The city of Ainsworth and the state of Nebraska are fortunate to have courageous citizens like Jeff Keezer and Bill Carr. These men are true heroes.●

NEW REVOLVER TOO BIG FOR "DIRTY" HARRY

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I want to bring to the attention of my colleagues

an article from the February 14, 2003, Los Angeles Times entitled "New Revolver Too Big For 'Dirty' Harry." The article discusses a new .50 caliber handgun manufactured by the Smith and Wesson Corporation. The 500 model, the biggest handgun currently in production, is 15 inches long, weighs 4.5 pounds, and uses a .50 caliber Magnum Smith and Wesson bullet that packs a muzzle force of 2,600 foot-pounds. The bullet is half an inch wide and is more powerful than comparable ammunition because it is much longer and contains more gun powder.

According to a Violence Policy Center expert cited in the article, the gun's cartridge has about twice the muzzle energy of most rounds for common semiautomatic assault weapons, such as the AR-15, a civilian version of the military's M-16. In fact, the new gun packs a punch powerful enough to stop a charging bear in its tracks.

A Smith and Wesson representative acknowledges that the company hopes the gun will help Smith and Wesson win back market share lost when the company agreed to a number of steps to improve gun safety and keep guns out of the hands of criminals. Smith and Wesson's decision to produce the .50 caliber handgun represents a step backward in the effort to improve gun safety. Not only has the company apparently scrapped its plan to work with the federal government to take sensible steps to make guns safer and keep guns from getting into the wrong hands, but the company seems to be headed in the opposite direction by creating a handgun that is reported to have double the power of most assault rifles.

Last year, I cosponsored the Military Sniper Weapon Regulation Act, a bill which would change the way .50 caliber sniper rifles are regulated by placing them under the requirements of the National Firearms Act. This bill would subject the sniper rifles to the same regimen of registration and background checks as other weapons of war, such as machine guns.

Unfortunately, the new Smith and Wesson .50 caliber handgun would not be affected by this legislation. However, both the .50 caliber handgun and sniper rifle are simply too powerful to be on the streets. Congress must take a long, hard look at these potentially lethal weapons.

[From the L.A. Times, Feb. 14, 2003]

A POWERFUL NEW REVOLVER IS DRAWING FIRE ALREADY

(By Ralph Frammolino and Steve Berry)

Even the most ardent firearm lovers acknowledge that Smith & Wesson's new .50-caliber Magnum revolver is more gun than anyone needs.

It has double the power of most assault rifles in America. Its kick can send a grown man reeling; a single bullet can drop a grizzly. It is so heavy and long that police say no-criminal would dare try to hide it in his waistband. It will cost as much \$989.

And gun buyers across the country can't wait to get their hands on it.

"The initial reaction has been even stronger than we had anticipated, so we're ramping